

A NEW METHOD OF MUSICAL TRAINING.

I feel sure that many students will be glad to hear about Miss Seppings' method of teaching music. We know how difficult it is to teach the rudiments of music clearly and to make them interesting to beginners. Except with really musical children the beginning is in so many cases mere drudgery, and with unmusical children it often seems so hopeless trying to teach them satisfactorily that the attempt is often abandoned. And yet, is it right to leave that side of the child's mind undeveloped merely through lack of a good method of teaching? It has been proved by Miss Seppings and others who have taught on her method, that even slow and unmusical children learn to love their music lessons and to play and read well. How often we hear of musical people who can play anything by ear but cannot read by sight. Miss Seppings' method appeals to the musical and unmusical alike. The results are quite marvellous. It absolutely does away with the tiresome part for beginners; the children simply love their lessons from the very first. And, above all, Miss Seppings' method teaches nothing that is not absolutely musical, nothing that has to be afterwards unlearned. The children have a box containing thirty-two small wooden cubes with the different notes stamped clearly on the sides; eleven long black strips of wood and ten white laths to represent the lines and spaces of the great stave and a small box of loose cardboard symbols, clefs, time signatures, notes, rests, sharps, flats, etc.

With this apparatus the children pass through all the difficulties that assail beginners with the greatest joy and ease, regarding it as a fascinating game. For instance, to learn the names and value of the notes the bricks are used. The child finds on each of the thirty-two cubes a note with a head,

a leg and three feet; it is the note that runs the fastest, and is of least value (of the notes in general use), and to match its three feet it has three names—"demi-semi-quaver." The cubes are placed in a row with this note uppermost, and are counted. Now begins a sort of puzzle game. Each cube is rolled over once to the right, and sixteen of them are found to be blank and sixteen have a note with only two feet, for which reason it cannot run so fast—only half as fast as a demi-semi-quaver. Also it has one name less; it is called semi-quaver (the surname must be kept, as it is the most important!) Again the cubes are turned over to the right, and this time there are only 8 with a note on, all the others being blanks, so 8 quavers=16 semi-quavers or 32 demi-semi-quavers. This note goes only half as fast as a semi-quaver, it has lost one leg and one name. Once more the cubes are turned over to the right to find 4 notes with no legs at all, it is rather like a *crutch* and is called a "crotchet." The cubes are now rolled over once towards you and two hollow notes appear resembling a transparent *minnow* and his tail: these notes are called "*minims*." Lastly, turning the cubes twice over towards you, you find one very valuable note which goes very slowly and is called a semibreve.

Is this not a fascinating way of learning the notes? What child would not delight in learning music on such a method as this?

Other puzzles can be done with the bricks, and then there is the joy of setting up the great stave with the lines and spaces and finding the clefs, etc. The notes are taught as intervals above or below middle C, the whole of the great stave being used. The notes are not read as letters of the alphabet; in fact, the children only use the letters as the names of the keys. They can play as easily in one key as in another.

My small pupil, aged $8\frac{1}{2}$, who has been learning for one term, can read and transpose into any key, major or minor, all the tunes on five notes in Miss Seppings' First Book of

Tiny Tunes (Bosworth and Co.). She knows the common chords in their three positions and is learning to play them as Arpeggi. The duets (Gurlitt's) are the greatest joy; she beats time on a triangle and never makes a mistake in the value of the notes.

It would take too long to tell of further wonders of Miss Seppings' method. I wish you could hear her yourselves, and I hope that it will be possible to arrange a London Students' meeting at which she would be able to make her method better known to the students. She would, I know, be willing to do so; only we ought to make sure of the meeting being well attended.

Miss Seppings has a holiday course of classes for teachers who wish to learn her method. The course I went to last September was most interesting; it lasted a week, two hours daily, and included the first or kindergarten stage, the transition period, and a great deal of valuable information on the teaching of sight reading, transposing, fingering, time, and rhythm. It was held at her town address, 23, St. Andrew's Mansions, Dorset Street, Manchester Square, W. The fee is three guineas. The next holiday course will be in April. She gives private lessons also.

It is quite possible to teach a child all the elementary part, given the Apparatus and Book of Instruction (price 9s. 6d., Bosworth and Co., 5, Prince's Street, Oxford Street, W.), but it becomes necessary as the pupil gets more advanced to have lessons from Miss Seppings.

K. L.

A KENT AND SUSSEX FLOWER LIST.

This year we have been very fortunate in our surroundings, as we spent all last term on the outskirts of Tunbridge Wells, removing to Wadhurst, Sussex, for the holidays.

Our flower list numbers 535, and contains many found only in Kent. In April fifty-seven fresh specimens (the usual spring ones) were added to the list, and in May we found 120 more. Among them was Coral-root (*Cardamine bulbifera*), a reddish flower not unlike Lady's Smock, with a curious bulb in the leaf-axil by which it propagates itself. We were told that some years it appeared only in one spot; we found it growing plentifully all round High Rocks.

Yellow corydal (*Corydalis lutea*), a native of South Europe, has become naturalised in Speldhurst Wood, where we also found Large Bitter-cress (*Cardamine amara*), a near relation of Lady's Smock, with white flowers, and by no means common.

We were much puzzled by a rather tall *Crepis* which occurred frequently in hayfields. A well-known botanist identified it as *Crepis biennis* or Rough Hawk's Beard, rare in Britain. We found Milkworts of all shades and sizes which defied classification; but a large blue-flowered variety we think must have been *Polygala austriaca*, found only in Kent.

In June our list jumped from 190 to 282. Amongst new specimens was a Columbine which we thought must be a garden escape. Our botanist friend told us that it was a wild plant in which the spurs had turned into petals.

By the end of July we had found altogether 405 flowers, including small-flowered Balsam (*Impatiens parviflora*), a tall, many-flowered species found only in the South of England;

Throw-wax (*Bupleurum rotundifolium*), so called from the stalk growing through or thorow the leaf, wax being the old word for "grow."

We also found a luxuriant variety of Cordgrass (*Spartina alternifolia*), Kent and Hampshire being its only home in Britain.

Fresh finds in August numbered but 94, amongst them being Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) and Great Dodder (*Cuscuta europaea*), a twining parasitical plant of greenish yellow.

In September the number of fresh specimens dropped to 35; one purplish-red flower growing in a marsh we think must be Water Germander (*Teucrium scordium*), but Bentham says it is rare, and we should like to know if anyone else has found it.

Of sixteen species of Speedwell, ten grow profusely in this district, as do the five Stachys, including the true Woundwort. On the other hand, we are still looking for Field Scabious, Burnets, and Clematis; field Poppies are not at all common, and the first piece of Toadflax was not found till September 4th.

During the winter we hope to be able to classify our "finds" according to their orders, so that we may further realise their connection one with another.

M. E. DAVIS.

WALKING IN SWITZERLAND.

We left Charing Cross at 2.15 and in due course, considering that we were travelling on the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, we got to Folkestone. We were taking only such things as we could each carry in a knapsack, or rather "rucksack," which is its proper name, so that we had no baggage to register or trouble about. Never again will I go for a tour with anything but a rucksack. They make very little difference when walking, and the trouble and bother saved in transport is not to be reckoned. The weather was very kind to us, and we got safely through the trial of crossing with no mishap, and so came to the land of France—Boulogne, to be accurate—where of course the first thing we saw was a little man in blue coat and greasy scarlet trousers. They call them soldiers over there. Naturally the first thing when we had found our four reserved corner seats in the train to Bâle was tea, and not caring to test the obnoxious mixture that passes for such in France, we sent our brother waving a new bright tin kettle about the station shouting, "*Eau bouillante?*" I don't know if he knew what it meant, but as he came back with some hot water someone must have taken pity on him. We were left in sole possession of our carriage, possibly because of the culinary operations going on inside. We had quite a pleasant journey through to Bâle, the only noteworthy facts being the flatness of the country, the treelessness and lack of completeness in the morn (quotation of a fellow-passenger), the vast number of calls upon our "billets," and the total disappearance of a pair of spectacles. No one knows where these last went to, and I suppose never will.

We went south by way of Laon, Rheims, Chalons, etc. At